



Energy and Environmental Affairs

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Baker-Polito Administration Awards \$905,000 to Municipalities to Restore Rivers by Replacing Failing Infrastructure

Projects Will Increase Community Resilience to Climate Change

WARREN – The Baker-Polito Administration announced \$905,000 in awards today to support local culvert replacement projects that improve municipal infrastructure and river health. The grants are provided by the Department of Fish and Game's Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) through its Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance grant program. The grants were announced as part of "Climate Week," a week highlighting Massachusetts' efforts to prepare for and combat climate change and celebrating the one year anniversary of Governor Baker's signing of [Executive Order 569](#). The Order, which builds on the administration's nation-leading efforts to reduce emissions, lays out a comprehensive approach to further mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, safeguard residents, municipalities and businesses from the impacts of climate change, and build a more resilient Commonwealth.

"Our administration is proud to support cities and towns across the Commonwealth as they upgrade their local infrastructure to improve storm readiness and protect the health of the Commonwealth's natural resources," **said Governor Charlie Baker**. "The grants provided through the Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program help ensure our state's infrastructure can handle large rain events exacerbated by climate change."

"Our cities and towns are on the front lines of climate change, and our administration is proud to partner with municipalities across the state as we work together to protect our citizens, our local economies and the environment in the face of a changing climate," **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. "The Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program's funding and technical assistance helps cities and towns improve aging infrastructure, ecological health, and climate change resilience within their communities."

The purpose of DER's new Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program is to encourage and help municipalities to replace existing culverts with crossings that meet improved design standards for fish and wildlife passage, river health, and storm resiliency.

"Flooding and aging infrastructure is one of the most serious challenges facing cities and towns across the Commonwealth," **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. "The Baker-Polito Administration is proud to continue to collaborate with communities across the state, and provide the funding necessary for municipal road managers to fix aging infrastructure while reducing public safety risks and supporting wildlife in our rivers, streams and wetland habitats."

Nearly half of Massachusetts' estimated 30,000 culverts are undersized and/or poorly positioned and act as barriers to fish and wildlife. Undersized culverts are also a serious risk to public safety, as increased rainfall can cause flood waters to overtop roads, resulting in washouts and road closures. Installing culverts that meet the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards allows waterways to flow more naturally with lower risk of flood damage. Recent studies have found that culverts designed to meet these Standards are often less expensive than in-kind culvert replacements over the lifespan of the structure.

"River restoration through culvert replacement provides multiple benefits to fish and wildlife, including improved water quality, expanded habitat for aquatic organisms, and improved fisheries for local anglers," **said Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Ron Amidon**.

The following 13 projects were awarded grants through the 2017 Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grants Program:

Bernardston - \$74,930: The Town of Bernardston will conduct field data collection, engineering and design, and permitting for a culvert replacement on the Mill Brook. Replacing the culvert will provide passage for fish and wildlife, and improve Bernardston's public safety and storm resilience by reducing flood impacts.

Boxford - \$24,250: The Town of Boxford will conduct engineering and design and permitting for a culvert replacement on an unnamed tributary to the Parkers River. Replacing the culvert will provide passage for fish and wildlife, improve Boxford's storm resilience by reducing flooding, and reduce maintenance cost by allowing debris to flow through the structure.

Brookfield - \$70,230: The Town of Brookfield will conduct engineering and design and permitting for a culvert replacement on an un-named tributary to the Quaboag River. The culvert replacement will improve connectivity of the headwater habitat for the 1,400 acre Quacumquasit Wildlife Management Area.

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Colrain - \$90,000: The Town of Colrain will conduct field data collection, engineering and design, and permitting for a culvert replacement on an un-named tributary to the North River. Replacing the culvert will provide passage for fish and wildlife, and improve Colrain's infrastructure by reducing the risk of culvert failure.

Framingham - up to \$155,000: The City of Framingham will conduct field data collection, engineering and design, and permitting for a culvert replacement on the Landham Brook. Replacing the culvert is the first step of a multi-phase project to improve ecological function, fish and wildlife connectivity, and storm resiliency while reducing flood impacts.

Lancaster - \$81,000: The Town of Lancaster will conduct field data collection, engineering and design, and permitting for a culvert replacement on the Wekepeke. Replacing the culvert will improve fish and wildlife passage and Lancaster's infrastructure and storm resilience.

Mashpee - \$50,000: The Town of Mashpee will conduct data collection, engineering and design, and permitting for a culvert replacement on the Santuit River. Replacing the culvert will improve fish passage and Mashpee's stormwater quality and infrastructure.

Princeton - \$78,740: The Town of Princeton will conduct field data collection, engineering and design, and permitting for a culvert replacement on the South Wachusett Brook. Replacing the culvert will provide passage for fish and wildlife and improve Princeton's infrastructure and storm resilience by reducing flood impacts.

Sheffield - \$97,000: The Town of Sheffield will conduct field data collection and preliminary engineering and design for a culvert replacement on the Dry Brook. Replacing the culvert will provide passage for fish and wildlife through the culvert. Sheffield's infrastructure and storm resilience will also be improved by reducing flood impacts and erosion.

Warren - \$49,200: The Town of Warren will conduct field data collection, engineering and design, and permitting for a culvert replacement on Taylor Brook. Replacing the culvert will provide passage for resident brook trout and other fish and wildlife, and will improve Warren's infrastructure and storm resilience.

Washington - \$37,750: The Town of Washington will conduct field data collection and engineering and design for a culvert replacement on Savery Brook. Replacing the culvert will provide passage for fish and wildlife and will improve Washington's infrastructure and storm resilience by reducing potential flood impacts.

Wenham - \$60,000: The Town of Wenham will conduct field data collection and engineering and design for a culvert replacement on an un-named tributary to the Ipswich River. Replacing the culvert will provide fish and wildlife passage, and will improve Wenham's infrastructure and storm resilience by reducing flood impacts and maintaining access to the Gordon College Campus.

Weston - \$36,900: The Town of Weston will conduct field data collection, engineering and design, and permitting for a culvert replacement on Cherry Brook. Replacing the culvert will provide passage for fish and wildlife and will improve Weston's infrastructure and storm resilience.

The statewide Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program is supported by DER's Capital Budget. Additional funding for projects in the Sudbury-Assabet-Concord Watershed is provided by the Department of Environmental Protection's Natural Resources Damages (NRD) Program through the Nyanza NRD settlement. The New England Forests and Rivers Fund administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and the Natural Resources Conservation Service is providing support to DER for grant development and technical assistance for projects located in the Deerfield River Watershed.

"MassDEP is pleased to work with DER to provide these funds, as benefiting native fish, such as brook trout, is a high priority for the NRD Trustees," **said MassDEP Commissioner Martin Suuberg**. The NRD Trustees include the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, represented by MassDEP, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"The Town of Warren continues to take necessary steps to ensure public safety and address environmental concerns," **said State Senator Anne Gobi (D-Spencer)**. "This grant will assist them in those efforts and I appreciate the support of the administration and Commissioner Amidon."

"This is terrific news for the residents of Warren as well as the surrounding ecosystem," **said State Representative Todd Smola (R-Warren)**. "This culvert replacement project will increase the health of local wildlife while safeguarding our infrastructure. I want to congratulate our hardworking town officials for securing these funds."

"Undersized culverts act as barriers to the natural habitats of fish and wildlife, and also pose serious threats to public safety by not adequately protecting against flood waters," **said State Senator Julian Cyr (D-Truro)**. "The state grant being awarded to the Sampson's Mill Road Project in Mashpee will not only assist in the engineering and permitting process of the culvert replacement, but it will allow the Santuit River to adequately support one of the few populations of sea run brook trout."

"Some of our most important pieces of infrastructure – like culverts – are the ones you may not notice. But they prevent floods, they keep roads clear, and most importantly, they make sure that you can drive from one place to the other without hassle," **said Senate Majority Leader Harriette Chandler (D-Worcester)**. "That's why I'm very happy that Princeton has received this grant, and that the Department of Fish & Game is keeping up good government policy by maintaining our infrastructure and protecting our local wildlife."

"Thank you to the Baker-Polito Administration and the Division of Ecological Restoration for providing this much needed funding," **State Representative Kimberly Ferguson (R-Holden)**. "I'm thrilled Princeton was chosen as a recipient and will

be able to make long overdue repairs to the Ball Hill Road culvert."

The mission of the Division of Ecological Restoration is to restore and protect the Commonwealth's rivers, wetlands and watersheds for the benefit of people and the environment. DER's Stream Continuity Program helps municipalities replace undersized culverts with better designed structures that meet ecological and public safety criteria, ultimately resulting in improvements to stream connectivity and a reduction in roadway and flood hazards.

The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) is responsible for promoting the conservation and enjoyment of the Commonwealth's natural resources. DFG carries out this mission through land protection and wildlife habitat management, management of inland and marine fish and wildlife species, and ecological restoration of fresh water, salt water, and terrestrial habitats. DFG promotes enjoyment of the Massachusetts environment through outdoor skills workshops, fishing festivals and other educational programs, and by enhancing access to the Commonwealth's rivers, lakes, and coastal waters.

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